

Wednesday, September 12, 2007

Karl Rove, fun street theater, and delayed arrest warrants.

Photo from website of U.S. District Court (W.D. Mi.). Although I do not go around advocating breaking the criminal law, this article gave me many chuckles about the street theater surrounding the actions of some American University students to dress as security as if they would be arresting Karl Rove, who came to visit American University's College Republicans last April 2007. Were the shoe on the other foot -- with students doing the same with a politician I support (although I am not enamored of many politicians), I expect I would laugh nearly as hard. Peculiar about this particular protest event is not that some of its participants were arrested (some of them allegedly blocked the entrance to the building, requiring entry through a separate door, and some lied down in front of Rove's vehicle after his talk, which are actions exposing people to arrest) but that the authorities delayed around five months to file criminal charging documents against them. Additionally, this article says the American University administration complied with a subpoena for information, which was apparently to help identify demonstrators to arrest; I would like to know if the university made any effort to fight the subpoena. In any event, thanks to my friend Mark Goldstone for his defense of these students, who apparently settled their case by paying a \$100 civil fine, the payment of which averted a trial and possibility of a guilty finding. Mark is the longtime chairperson of the demonstrations committee of the local National Lawyers Guild chapter. I have had the pleasure of collaborating with him on several political cases, including successfully defending two people arrested and prosecuted for handing out leaflets announcing an anti-Bush demonstration, defending two people over the destruction of a Bush-Cheney campaign sign, and defending a slew of anti-globalization demonstrators. Unlike the Guild, I cover the entire political spectrum of clients in defending individual rights, including my defense of then-American University student and anti-leftist Ben Wetmore, whose rights American University severely abused after he videotaped Tipper Gore's talk on campus, in full compliance with warning that there be no flash photography. Jon Katz. ADDENDUM: Thanks to a listserv member for informing me about this news item.

Posted by Jon Katz in Criminal Defense at 02:00